Title : Shri P. Karunakaran called the attention of the Minister of Agriculture to the situation arising out of fall in prices of Pepper, Cardamom, Arecanut and other agricultural cash crops thereby leading to starvation and death amongst the workers engaged in this sector and steps taken by the Governemnt in this regard.

i. Situation arising out of fall in the prices of Pepper, Cardamom, Arecanut and other agricultural cash crops thereby leading to starvation and death amongst the workers engaged in this sector and steps taken by the Government in this regard.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now, we would take up the item number 12 − Calling Attention.

Shri P. Karunakaran.

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN: Sir, I call the attention of the Minister of Agriculture to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon:

"The situation arising out of fall in prices of Pepper, Cardamom, Arecanut and other agricultural cash crops thereby leading to starvation and death amongst the workers engaged in this sector and steps taken by the Government in this regard. "

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now, I would request the hon. Minister, Dr. Akhilesh Prasad Singh.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): Sir, during the current year, there has been a mixed trend observed in the prices ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: If you wish, you can lay the statement on the Table of the House.

...(*Interruptions*)

DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH: Yes, Sir.

*DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH : During the current year, there has been a mixed trend observed in the prices of cash crops in the country, as measured by wholesale price index. While the prices of black pepper and arecanut have shown a declining trend, the prices of cardamom have increased. In the case of raw rubber and coffee prices have increased as measured by their wholesale price index. In the case of raw cotton, prices have increased.

Wholesale Monthly Price Indices, 2005 (March & October)

S. No.	Crop	March	October
1.	Black pepper	186.6	174.6
2.	Cardamom	112.7	114.9
3.	Betel nuts / Arecanut	143.8	139.2

Production

The production of black pepper has been fluctuating between 61-72 thousand tonnes during 2000-01 to 2003-04 of which Kerala's share is more than 93%. The production of cardamom has been in the range of 14-15 thousand tonnes of which Kerala's share is in the range of 52-60%. The production of arecanut has increased from 373.1 thousands tonnes to 417.5 thousand tonnes during this period. The share of Kerala is ranging between 20-26%.

Effects of Export / Imports

In the case of black pepper there was a steep decline in exports from 42,806 tonnes in 1999-2000 to 14,150 tonnes in 2004-05. At the same time there was a

* Laid on the Table. Also placed in Library, See No. LT 2992/2005

significant increase in the import of pepper from 3124 tonnes in 1999-2000 to around 17725 tonnes in 2004-05. Significant increase in world production of pepper and emergence of new producers such as Vietnam as also high productivity coupled with negligible domestic consumption of pepper in these countries resulted in an expansion in supplies in the domestic market. The decline in prices of pepper in the India domestic market reflects the trend in international prices.

The prices of Cardamom also in the domestic also in the domestic market reflect the trend of declining international prices. Export of **Cardamom** during 2002-03 to 2004-05 is stagnating around 650-750 tonnes tonnes and the import of Cardamom increased from 59.40 tonnes in 2003-04 to 290.00 tonnes in 2004-05. However, the prices, as mentioned above have shown some increase (1.8%) during the current year. During the last years prices have shown a declining trend.

From 2000-01 onwards prices of Arecanut in the domestic market have shown a declining trend, which continues in the current year also. During 1999-2000 import of arecanut increased due to removal of quantitative restrictions in the context of trade liberalization. Increased import along with high domestic production led to declining prices. During 2004-05, India imported 33,088 tonnes of arecanut valued at Rs. 4558 Lakhs.

Details of incidence of suicide

It is unfortunate that the farmers have committed suicide during the past few years. The main causes identified by the State Governments for committing suicide by farmers are indebtedness, crop failure, non-payment of loans taken from private moneylenders at high rate of interest etc.

Status regarding the State of Kerala

The growing incidence of fragmentation and consequent decline in the average size of land holding contributes to the predominance of uneconomically small and marginal holdings in Kerala. The low productivity of crops, the poor investment capability of the small and marginal farmers and the high cost of production make Kerala's agriculture sector more vulnerable. The high incidence of pest and diseases on crops also further aggravate the situation.

The unprecedented drought that prevailed in the State continuously for two years caused severe crop losses coupled with steep fall in price of cash crops and huge financial debts leading to the suicide of farmers.

As reported by the State Government of Kerala, the total number of farmers who have committed suicide in Kerala during three years i.e., 2002-2004 is 180.

Steps taken by the Government of Kerala

Moratorium for one year from 23.01.2004 on agricultural loans of Co-operatives and also compensation for the loss sustained by way of interest and penal interest.

A one-time settlement scheme has been implemented.

Instructions have been issued to Co-operative Banks regarding conversion and rescheduling of eligible loans and to postpone the recovery steps for agricultural loans for a period of one year.

In the special package announced for Wayanad District, the district worst affected by drought, the interest on loan availed by farmers has been waived up to an amount of Rs. 50,000/- till 31.03.2006 during which period the State Government owns the liability for payment of interest to the concerned banks.

To help the farmers who cultivate arecanut, coffee and pepper, special package to relief measures involving procurement of arecanut and pepper and providing production incentive for coffee is being implemented by the State Government.

Government have extended financial assistance to the tune of Rs. 50,000/- to each of the families of farmers, who have committee suicide.

On the direction of the PMO, a Multi-Disciplinary Central Team visited Kerala in July-August, 2004 to assess the agricultural situation in the State. Based on the recommendations of the Team, the following decisions taken by the PMO have been implemented.

(a) Rs. 106.00 crore released to the State Government from the National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF).

(b) The Ministry of Finance has finalized debt-restructuring guidelines for perennial horticulture and plantation crops.

(c) Old development loans availed by growers from the Coffee Board amounting to Rs. 24 crore waived by the Government of India.

(d) Release of Rs. 30 crores under the scheme of Macro-management of Agriculture for undertaking the rehabilitation of cashew and pepper plantations in three annual instalments. The first instalment of Rs. 10 crore was released in 2004-05.

Steps Taken by different State Governments

The State Governments have taken various relief measures to alleviate the distressing condition of the farmers. In addition, the State Governments particularly Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra have been granting ex-gratia amount of Rs. 1 lakh to each of the affected families. Some State Governments like Maharashtra and Punjab have also commissioned studies through specialized agencies to find the root causes of this malady and suggest remedial measures.

Due to persistent efforts of the State Governments, there is perceptible decline in the number of cases of suicide by farmers in the current financial year as evidenced by the data in the enclosed statement.

Steps Taken by Central Government

The Government of India has also, interalia, taken the following important steps:

Black pepper

Depptt. Of Agriculture and Cooperation, Government of India, in consultation with State Govt. of Kerala has sanctioned a Market Intervention Scheme for procurement of 5050 MT of Black Pepper at a Market Intervention Price of Rs. 70 per kg. from 15.2.2005 to 31.3.2005.

Govt. of India on October 27, 2005 announced a Scheme for grant of subsidy on export of pepper from India at the rate of Rs. 5 per kg. (or actual cost incurred, whichever is less) for international freight and Rs. 2 per kg. for internal transport for a maximum 20,000 metric tones of pepper,. The subsidy would be provided as a one time measure, upto March,31, 2006.

The regime of advance licenses for duty free import of pepper for re-export purpose/excluding light berries required for the oleoresin industry has been discontinued w.e.f. June 7, 2005.

Department of Commerce have advised DGF&T to look into allegations of infringement of law, including mis-declaration, misuse of advance licence.

Department of Commerce has also written to Department of Revenue to request the customs authorities to keep strict vigil against unscrupulous activities relating to import of spices.

It has also been decided to deny the facility of DTA (Domestic Tariff Area) sales of pepper and pepper products under EOU scheme.

It has also been made mandatory for the EOU units to gets themselves registered with a Spices Board also.

Cardamom

Spices Board, Cochin extends financial assistance to the Cardamom growers through its Plans schemes for production of planting material, re-planting, irrigation and land development etc.

The Spices Board is popularizing usage of cardamom, with a view to increase its consumption, through domestic international exhibitions.

Spices Board has extended an air freight subsidy from the CDF (Cardamom Development Fund) at the rate of Rs. 30/- per Kg for Cardamom procured from auction centres for the purpose of export to Middle East destinations during 16.10.2004 to 30.11.2004. The air freight assistance was offered to enable Cardamom

exporters to airlift Cardamom to the Middle East market and position Indian Cardamom in those markets before the arrival of fresh Cardamom from Guatemala. Subsequently, the air freight assistance was enhanced to Rs. 45/- per Kg. during December, 2004 to February, 2005. At present, the scheme is not in operation.

Arecanut

Government of India raised import duty on Arecanut from 35 to 100 per cent to restrict the imports.

Finance Ministry has also issued instructions to the Customs Officials to prevent the illegal entry of Arecanut into the country

SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPPAN (TRICHUR): Sir, please allow the hon. Minister to read the statement....(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I have a lot of business to finish today.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN : Sir, I have gone through the statement made by the hon. Minister of Agriculture. Some of the decisions taken by the Central Government as well as by the State Governments are included in the statement. But I am sorry to say that the statement does not reflect the actual situation really prevailing in the agricultural sector as well as in the cash crops in Kerala and in other parts of our country.

Sir, part of our rural Kerala has been experiencing an acute agricultural distress. This distress has come in the form of drastic price fall, unbearable debt burden and also the low production in some sectors.

Sir, in the statement made by the hon. Minister it is stated that there is a mixed price trend in some of the commodities. It is not true when we see the price falling in many of the commodities. The Wholesale Price Index never reflects the actual situation in the retail price either in the commodities or in other sections.

Sir, if I go through the figures with regard to price fall, we can see how disastrous the situation is. With regard to pepper − the 1 kg of pepper, the price was Rs. 215 per kg; in 2000, it came down to Rs. 174 per kg; in 2001, it came down to Rs. 80 per kg; in 2002, the price was Rs. 88 per kg; and again in 2003, the price was Rs. 74 per kg. So, there is no mixed trend. The trend is really declining.

Sir, take for example, the price of tea. In 1998 it was Rs. 73 per kg.; Rs. 62 per kg. in 1999, Rs. 57 in 2000, RS. 55 in 2001 and Rs. 50 per kg. in 2002. Also, take this green tea. It was a very disastrous situation. In 1998 the price was only Rs. 15 per kg.; in 1999 it was Rs. seven and in 2002 it came down to only six rupees a kg. There is 43 per cent of fall in the price as far as tea is concerned.

Take the case of coffee. In 1995 the price was Rs. 137 per kg., in 1996 it was Rs. 80, and it came down to Rs. 63 in 1997, Rs. 43 in 1998, Rs. 33 in 2000, Rs. 23 in 2001 and in the year 2002 it was only Rs. 17 per kg. Same is the case with regard to cardamom. Five years back the price was Rs. 900 per kg. and now it is between Rs. 120 and Rs. 170 per kg. With regard to arecanut, three years back, one kg. of arecanut was costing Rs. 160 and now it is only Rs. 40 or Rs. 45. Sir, you see the drastic changes that have come about in the prices.

The major districts in Kerala, especially Vayanad, Idukki and Kasargod are aggressively affected. As I said, the main cash crops are pepper, cardamom, arecanut, tea, coffee and other commodities. While the prices of the agricultural products came down, at the same time if you see the service sector, in education and health the cost is going high. Take the case of agricultural inputs. In some cases there is cent per cent increase that we can see in the price of fodder and also in pesticides and others. As a result of this, the farmers are unable to cultivate their land. The cost of production is so high that they cannot meet it. They have to take loans from the banks. They have taken the loans but they are unable to pay the principal or interest. As a result the question before the farmers in Kerala is whether to live or die. As Shakespeare said, it is a question of 'to be or not to be'. That became the question now. Sir, the Government has to take perspective steps and also certain steps in order to save the peasants in Kerala, not only in Kerala but in other parts of the country also.

Sir, in the statement made by the hon. Minister, there is a mention that there are only 180 cases of suicide and that it is all. I remember that in this House itself we have raised an issue and then the hon. Minister of

Agriculture said that there was no report from Kerala of the suicides. But then, this statement says there are 180 cases. But the fact is that 1,300 farmers have committed suicide in the last three or four years. In Vayanad district there are 476 cases. A distant relative of our hon. Member Shri Veerendra Kumar had also committed suicide. In Idukki district there are 176 cases. In Kasargod there are 180 cases. The figures given by the hon. Minister with regard to the suicides is also not correct.

The Statement made by the hon. Minister says that it is due to the small holdings in Kerala that there is a low production. It is really wrong because as far as Kerala is concerned the land legislation came into existence in 1957. The agricultural crisis really started in Kerala and also in other parts of the country from 1990 onwards. It has sharpened five or six years back. So, that calculation is wrong. Not only that, when the farmers get their own land, their motivation to cultivation is higher as far as Kerala is concerned.

We have to see what really the reason is. We have to analyse the root cause. Then only we can treat. It is true that constant floods and droughts are one of the reasons. The main reason is India is a member of WTO. We have discussed it yesterday.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : We have discussed WTO thoroughly only yesterday.

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN : Yes Sir. We are a member of WTO. We signed an Accord with Sri Lanka. As a result of that we have to import many of the items. We are bound to follow many of the conditions of the WTO. Our Malabar pepper has gone to the world. Earlier, Portuguese people were getting this black pepper from us. But now pepper is coming from Sri Lanka. We have to use Sri Lankan pepper. It is not only the Sri Lankan pepper but the pepper from Vietnam, Malaysia and Thailand etc. are re-routed through Sri Lanka. As a result of this our domestic market is really weakened.

It should not be at the cost of our agriculture and our domestic industry. Why has this situation come? This is the main question. What can the Government do in the long run and also in the short run? That is the main issue with regard to this case. With regard to agricultural issues, the Government can give some concessions to the agriculture, but as far as cash crops are concerned, they are not giving the concessions. I want to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government will consider introducing a special package scheme to assist the farmers of cardamom, rubber, tea, pepper and other cash crops in the list.

Also, the main issue is restriction on the imports. I would like to know whether the Government would restrict the imports in accordance with the requirements of our domestic market.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Four Members are yet to speak.

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN : Sir, this is a very big issue. I am concluding in two or three minutes.

There should be employment opportunities. This House has passed the Employment Guarantee Bill. It is applicable to Vayanad now, but this should be applied to Idukki and Kasargod also and there should be flexibility in its implementation.

There are 26 items which have got the supporting price at the national level, but there is only one item, Copra, from Kerala in this list. Eighty-one per cent of pepper is produced in Kerala. We are contributing crores and crores of rupees. This is not a question of Kerala alone; this is a question of India as a whole. Among these 26 items, only Copra from Kerala is included. Will the Government take stern step to include other cash crops also?

With regard to tea, I would like to submit that workers in the tea estates of Kerala, especially Idukki district, are going to Sabarimala not to worship but to get some jobs. What I can say is that we have taken some decision with regard to Nilgiri. Similarly, minimum price has to be fixed for green tea leaves, especially Kolandhu. This is the time when the Government has to take a decision whether you allow the farmers to die or you make them live. That is the main question. That is what we have to take a decision about.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shrimati D. Purandeswari. You may ask only clarifications.

SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI: Sir, I would not like to talk about tea, coffee, cardamom and pepper as my colleague Shri Karunakaran has ably touched them. I would like to refer to cotton and chilly, in particular, here.

Sir, cotton, as we all know, has a Minimum Support Price, but I would like to draw the attention of the Minister to the fact that the Minimum Support Price has not been scientifically derived. The input cost, as correctly pointed out by Shri Karunakaran, has risen quite a bit, but the Minimum Support Price, which the Government had been fixing, is not in tune with the input cost. When we talk about inputs, it includes seeds, fertilisers,

power, water and all that goes into production. Since the input costs have increased, I think, a review must be done of the Minimum Support Prices which the Government is fixing. The Minimum Support Price of cotton is Rs. 2,010 whereas the price of seeds of BT cotton, which the farmers are resorting to, itself is coming between Rs. 1,750 and Rs. 1,800 per acre. So, nowhere does the Minimum Support Price match the input cost. I would request the hon. Minister if he can tell us in the House whether they would review the Minimum Support Price.

There is no Minimum Support Price for chillies. We have only a market intervention scheme which comes into force only if the norms which the market intervention scheme specifies are met. This is the crop which is not long-standing like tea or coffee, or any other spices. This is a crop which gives its yield within six months and after six months, it has to be replanted. This crop also needs to be given a Minimum Support Price. If I am correct, the Government of Andhra Pradesh has already sent a request to this effect to the Union Government. So, I would request the hon. Minister to tell us in the House if they would consider fixing a Minimum Support Price for chillies and if they would re-think about Minimum Support Prices which they are fixing for other cash crops also.

श्री अविनाश राय खन्ना : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, मंत्री जी ने जो स्टेटमैन्ट दिया है, उसे मैंने पढ़ा है। आज जिस तरह से श्री मणि शंकर अय्यर जी ने माना कि जो फैक्ट्स एंड फिग्र्स पार्लियामैन्ट में दिये गए हैं, वे गलत हैं। इसी तरह से मेरा मानना है और मंत्री जी भी मानेंगे कि पंजाब के बारे में जो फैक्ट्स एंड फिग्र्स दिये गये हैं, वे आपने बिल्कुल गलत दिये हैं। आपने वर्ा 2002-2003 में पंजाब में सिर्फ दो सुसाइड केस इंडीकेट किये हैं। लेकिन मैं आपके माध्यम से माननीय मंत्री जी के ध्यान में लाना चाहता हूं कि पंजाब में उपरोक्त समय में 329 किसानों ने आत्महत्याएं की हैं - ये फिग्र्स इसमें क्यों नहीं हैं? इन सब चीजों के एक-दो कारण हैं, जिन्हें आप आसानी से हल कर सकते हैं। पहला कारण यह है कि कैश क्राप की मार्केटिंग की फैसिलिटी किसानों को नहीं मिलती है, अच्छी मार्केटिंग नहीं मिलती है, क्राप का पैसा नहीं मिलता है, जिसके कारण किसान सुसाइड करने की तरफ बढ़ता है।

मैं आपको एक उदाहरण देना चाहता हूं। एक बार एक किसान 40 किलो गोभी लेकर मंडी में गया। मंडी में आढ़ती ने उससे कहा कि यह 40 रुपये की है। यह सुनकर किसान गोभी फेंकने लगा। वहां एक कोऑपरेटिव कोल्ड स्टोर का एक व्यक्ति खड़ा था, जो यह सब देख रहा था। उसने किसान से कहा कि गोभी मत फेंको, मुझे दे दो, जब इसके रेट ज्यादा हो जायेंगे तो मैं इसे बेचकर आपको पूरे पैसे दे दूंगा। इस तरह से उसने वह 40 किलो गोभी कोल्ड स्टोरेज में रख दी और दो महीने बाद जब शादियों का सीजन शुरू हुआ तो वही बंदगोभी 40 रुपये किलो के हिसाब से बिकी। इस तरह से जिस किसान को 40 किलो गोभी के 40 रुपये मिल रहे थे, उसे उस गोभी के 1600 रुपये मिल गये। इस तरह से यदि सरकार किसानों की कैश क्राप के लिए मार्केटिंग की सुविधा दे दे तो किसानों को उनकी फसल का उचित मूल्य मिलेगा और किसानों द्वारा सुसाइड करने का ट्रैन्ड भी खत्म होगा।

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, दूसरी बात मैं कहना चाहता हूं कि एन.डी.ए. सरकार ने किसानों के लिए इंकम इश्योरेन्स स्कीम चलाई थी। यदि किसानों की आमदनी पक्की हो, किसानों को अपनी फसल का सही पैसा मिले तो वह इन समस्याओं से बाहर निकल सकता है। मैं मंत्री जी के ध्यान में लाना चाहता हूं कि पंजाब में दो सुसाइड हुई हैं, ऐसे गलत आंकड़े देकर आपने पंजाब को बहुत लाइटली लिया है। मेरे ख्याल से पूरे देश में ऐसी घटना कभी नहीं हुई होगी जो पंजाब में हुई। पंजाब में एक पूरा गांव हाथ में बैनर लेकर सड़क पर आकर खड़ा हो गया। उनके बैनर पर लिखा था कि यह गांव सेल के लिए है, जो खरीदना चाहते हैं वे इस गांव को खरीद लें, क्योंकि हम लोग यहां से जा रहे हैं। इस तरह से बहुत से किसान अपने बड़े-बड़े मकान छोड़कर वहां से चले गये। अभी तक उनका पता नहीं चला है। आज पंजाब में सिचुएशन बहुत खराब है, इसलिए मंत्री जी आप इस ओर विशे ध्यान दीजिए और आज सदन में इस बारे में कुछ एश्योरेंस भी दीजिए। धन्यवाद।

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: Sir, I fully subscribe to what Shri Karunakaran has said. I come from the area Wayanad. I have only three points to make.

The commodity exchange on coffee in India is poorly managed with no firm conditions and follow up actions. I bring it to the notice of the Government. Many of the norms fixed by the NMCE were violated by the exchange itself mainly to favour certain multinational companies. For instance, the stipulated date for delivery against July contract of coffee was 15th July, 2005. No delivery was given on this date. Huge open positions were kept unsettled by July 15 as certain MNCs could not deliver within the stipulated time. The genuine growers and other regular participants in the exchange had to suffer huge losses because of this single act of the exchange. As a result of the default of the MNCs in not delivering coffee to the buyer members on time in July, 2005, the buyer members were eligible to get Rs. 76 per kg. instead of Rs. 63 per kg. This was also not allowed by the NMCE, mainly to protect the sellers. Several appeals have been made both to the exchange and also to the Forward Market Commission, but nothing good has come out of these efforts.

It is common knowledge that ultimately the growers suffer. Forward trading in commodities like coffee results only in loss to the growers, and only the middlemen and other powerful cartels make the gains. The regulatory authorities also appear to be blind to the situation. There should be a proper and thorough investigation into the working of this exchange and justice should be done to the participants.

As regards pepper, some hon. Members have already mentioned about the import from Sri Lanka. The pepper that comes through Sri Lanka to India is inferior in quality. According to traders, each bag of 50 kg of pepper that is imported contains 1.5 kg of dust, and the moisture content in it is 14 per cent. As per the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act (PFA), the permissible level of moisture in pepper is only 12 per cent. Therefore, I urge the Government to allow the Spices Board officials to be present at the port when pepper consignments arrive from Sri Lanka, and they should verify and certify the quality of pepper imported. I am saying this because the

Customs officials are not well versed with the quality of pepper imported. Hence, the involvement of Spices Board officials is a must to check foul play in this area.

I would like to make one more point with regard to this issue. In order to regulate genuine imports, it is very important that import of pepper to India should be done only through the Kochi port, and not through any other port.

There is a tea plantation in my Constituency called the Padur Plantation, which is closed for almost three years, and nearly 1,500 workers have no job. The Commerce Minister had assured me in the House that he would take up the matter with the Kerala Government. But it has not been taken up with them till this date.

Lastly, the Agriculture Ministry is giving the reply to this debate, but the Commerce Ministry is creating havoc. I feel that there should be proper understanding and coordination if we have to address the issues related to commerce. Thank you very much.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Shailendra Kumar, but I would only allow you to ask a clarificatory question.

श्री शैलेन्द्र कुमार : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, काली मिर्च, इलायची, सुपारी और अन्य कृषि नकदी फसलों की कीमतों में आई गिरावट से उत्पन्न स्थिति के कारण इस क्षेत्र में कार्यरत मज़दूरों में भुखमरी से होने वाली मौतों के संबंध में माननीय सदस्य श्री पी. करुणाकरण जी ने जो ध्यानाकर्षण प्रस्ताव रखा है, मैं उससे अपने को संबद्ध करते हुए कहना चाहूंगा कि यह केवल केरल या पंजाब की बात नहीं है। आज पूरे हिन्दुस्तान में जो भी उत्पादन हमारे किसान कर रहे हैं, उसके वाजिब दाम उनको नहीं मिल पा रहे हैं। उनके लिए वाजिब मूल्य निर्धारित किये जाने चाहिए। दूसरी तरफ जो खेतिहर मज़दूर हैं और जो गांवों में छोटे छोटे किसान हैं, जो खेतों में मज़दूरी करके अपना जीवन्यापन करते हैं, उनके सामने दिक्कत यह है कि उन्होंने बैंकों से लोन ले लिया है लेकिन उसकी अदायगी नहीं कर पा रहे हैं। उनकी फसलों का वाजिब मूल्य न मिलने के कारण आज वे भुखमरी की कगार पर हैं और आत्महत्या करने तक को मजबूर हैं। हमें कोशिश करनी चाहिए कि केन्द्र सरकार द्वारा 'काम के बदले अनाज योजना' या 'राष्ट्रीय रोज़गार गारंटी योजना' को पूरे हिन्दुस्तान में लागू करके कम से कम ऐसे खेतिहर मज़दूरों को रोज़गार देने की बात होनी चाहिए ताकि उनका गांवों से शहरों की तरफ पलायन न हो और उनको अपने यहां रोज़गार मिल सके। इन्हीं शब्दों के साथ मैं इस बात पर बल देता हूं और खासकर सरकार से मांग करता हूं कि जिन किसानों ने 20-25 हज़ार रुपये या 50 हज़ार रुपये तक के लोन लिये हैं, यदि उनकी स्थिति खराब है तो सरकार उनके ऋणों को माफ करे, तभी हम किसानों की भुखमरी और आत्महत्या से छुटकारा पा सकते हैं।

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Hon. Members, as a general practice only five hon. Members are allowed to speak or ask clarifications on a Calling Attention. I have a few more names of hon. Members who wish to speak on this issue, but I also have to take-up another Calling Attention after this. Therefore, if the hon. Members assure me that they would only ask clarifications within one minute each, then I can allow 3 or 4 more hon. Members. अगर उनको भाषण करने हैं, then I cannot allow it.

SHRI SURESH KURUP (KOTTAYAM): Yes, Sir, we totally agree with this suggestion of yours.

SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPPAN : Sir, no speech will be made, and only questions will be asked.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: If the hon. Member makes a speech, तो मैं बीच में रोक दूंगा। I would only allow the hon. Members to ask clarificatory questions. Shri Suresh Kurup.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : Sir, one important reason for fall in the prices of cardamom is that huge quantities of cardamom are being dumped from Nepal into India *via* Kolkata port. This is the constant complaint of the farmers there. I mean to say that it is being imported from Nepal into the Kolkata port. This is one of the main reasons for fall in the prices of cardamom. Will the Ministry co-ordinate with the Commerce Ministry to take immediate and urgent steps to tackle this problem?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Thank you. Shri C. K. Chandrappan, but I would only allow you to ask a clarificatory question.

SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPPAN : Sir, the Minister in his statement has agreed that indebtedness is one of the main reasons for peasants committing suicide in this sector. I would like to know from the hon. Minister what is the leviable duty according to Government's decision on these items and what are the rates actually levied on those items when they are imported. Considering the indebtedness problem, would the Government consider as a special case to give loans to peasants at an interest rate of four per cent?

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : Sir, associating with the sentiments expressed by all the hon. Members I would point out certain facts for the consideration of the Minister as well as of this House. We must remember that Kerala means 'the land of coconut'. The state of affairs there is deplorable.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: You are requested to seek a clarification and not go into the history.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : There are about 25 lakh small coconut growers there who are really in starvation. This is due to an error committed by the Government of India by entering into the World Trade

Agreement. Copra as we know is an agricultural product. Unfortunately, it became an industrial product following the World Trade Agreement. Similarly, we know natural rubber to be an agricultural product. Unfortunately, as per the terms of the World Trade Agreement, it is an industrial produce. Hence, rubber growers and coconut growers are put to starvation. It is because of the negligence of the then Government which did not consider the plight of Kerala in these matters that we are in difficulty.

The Boards constituted for the development of these two commodities, rubber and coconut, are helpless in coming to the rescue of the farmers. So also the Spices Board. The same is the situation there. They cannot help cardamom growers. They are not in a position to do anything to pepper growers.

From time immemorial we had relations with Arabia. People from Arabia came to Kerala in the past and collected the produce. Nowadays we cannot sell it because of imports from other countries. This is another aspect. Moreover, all the tea estates in Kerala are closed down. They are not functioning. So, the economy of the State of Kerala is in difficulty. Until and unless the Government comes to their rescue, our position will become much more deplorable. So, I would request the hon. Minister to give sufficient directions to the concerned statutory bodies which are constituted for development of these agricultural products.

डॉ. अखिलेश प्रसाद सिंह : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, माननीय पी. करूणाकरन ने केरल के मजदूरों का सवाल उठाया है। उसके संबंध में मैं बताना चाहता हूं कि भारत सरकार ने स्थिति में सुधार के लिए कई कदम उठाए हैं और उनमें सबसे महत्वपूर्ण मामला सुपारी उगाने वाले केरल के किसानों का कीमतों के बारे में है। जहां तक दूसरे उत्पादों का संबंध है, उनके लिए सबसे पहले प्रधानमंत्री कार्यालय के निर्देश पर एक बहु-अनुशासनिक केंद्रीय दल ने राज्य की कृषि की स्थिति का मूल्यांकन करने के लिए जुलाई, 2004 में केरल का दौरा किया था।

15.00 hrs.

महोदय, उस दौरे के पश्चात् जो निर्णय लिए गए थे, उन्हें कार्यान्वित किया गया है। सबसे पहले राज्य सरकार को राष्ट्रीय आपदा आकस्मिक कोष से रुपए 106 करोड़ जारी किए गए हैं। दूसरे बारहमासी बागवानी तथा बागान फसलों के लिए ऋण प्रतिबंधी दिशा निर्देशों को वित्त मंत्रालय ने अंतिम रूप दे दिया है और तीसरे काजू तथा मिर्च की खेती के पुनर्वास का कार्य प्रारम्भ करने के लिए वृहद् कृषि प्रबन्धन स्कीम के अन्तर्गत 30 करोड़ रुपए जारी किए गए हैं। इनमें से 10 करोड़ रुपए की पहली किस्त वर्ष 2004-05 में जारी की गई थी।

महोदय, काली मिर्च का सवाल श्री पी. करुणाकरन् साहब ने बार-बार उठाया है। मैं बताना चाहता हूं कि सबसे पहले, उसमें मार्केट इंट्वेंशन योजना के अंतर्गत दिनांक 15-02-2005 से दिनांक 31-02-2005 तक 70 रुपए प्रति किलो के बाजार हस्तक्षेप मूल्य पर 5050 मीट्रिक काली मिर्च के प्रोक्योरमेंट के लिए अनुमति दी गई है। दूसरे, भारत सरकार ने 27 अक्तूबर, 2005 को 5 रुपए प्रति किलो की दर, अथवा वास्तविक लागत जो भी कम हो, अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय भाड़े तथा 2 रुपए प्रति किलो आन्तरिक परिवहन, अधिकतम 20,000 मीट्रिक टन मिर्च के लिए, भारत से मिर्च के निर्यात पर वित्तीय सहायता के अनुदान के लिए एक योजना घोषित की थी। वित्तीय सहायता 31 मार्च, 2006 तक वन टाइम सैटलमेंट के रूप में प्रदान की जाएगी। पुनर्निर्यात के उद्देश्य हेतु मिर्च के शुल्क मुक्त आयात/आलियो उद्योग के लिए वांछित हल्के सरसफल को छोड़कर, अग्रिम लाइसेंस प्रणाली को 7 जून, 2005 से समाप्त कर दिया गया है। डी.जी.एफ.टी. द्वारा कानून उल्लंघन, गलत घोषणा और अग्रिम लाइसेंस के दुरुपयोग के आरोपों पर ध्यान दिया जा रहा है। यह भी निर्णय लिया गया है कि ई.ओ.यू. स्कीम के अन्तर्गत मिर्च तथा मिर्च उत्पादों डी.टी.ए. (घरेलू शुल्क क्षेत्र) बिक्री की सुविधा को अस्वीकार कर दिया गया है। ई.ओ.यू. यूनिट के लिए मसाला बोर्ड से भी अपनी यूनिट को रजिस्टर कराना अनिवार्य कर दिया गया है।

महोदय, जहां तक इलायची का सवाल इस सदन में उठाया गया है। मैं बताना चाहता हूं कि मसाला बोर्ड ने इस बारे में कुछ कदम उठाए हैं। इसमें इलायची उत्पादकों को बागान सामग्री, पुनःरोपण, सिंचाई तथा भू-विकास आदि के लिए वित्तीय सहायता बढ़ा दी है। इसकी खपत को बढ़ाने के उद्देश्य से मसाला बोर्ड इलायची के उपयोग को लोकप्रिय बना रहा है। दिनांक 16-10-2004 से दिनांक 30-11-2004 के दौरान इलायची के लिए सी.डी.एफ. (इलायची विकास निधि) से 30 रुपए प्रति किलोग्राम की दर से हवाई भाड़ा वित्तीय सहायता बढ़ा दी गई है। इसके बाद, हवाई भाड़ा सहायता दिसम्बर, 2004 से फरवरी, 2004 के दौरान बढ़ाकर 45 रुपए प्रति किलोग्राम कर दी गई है। यह ग्वाटेमाला से नई इलायची के आगमन से पहले मध्य पूर्व विपणन को इलायची पहुंचाने के लिए किया गया था।

महोदय, जहां तक सुपारी का सवाल है, भारत सरकार ने आयात पर नियन्त्रण करने हेतु सुपारी पर 35 से 100 प्रतिशत आयात शुल्क बढ़ा दिया है। वित्त मंत्रालय ने सीमा शुल्क अधिकारियों से देश में सुपारी के अवैध प्रवेश को रोकने के लिए अनुदेश भी जारी किए हैं और केरल सरकार ने भी कुछ कदम उठाए हैं जिनमें केरल सरकार ने जिन किसानों ने आत्महत्या कर ली है, उनके परिवार, को आर्थिक सहायता 50,000/- रुपए तक बढ़ा दी है। 23-01-04 से एक वर्ष के लिए सहकारिता के कृषि ऋण के ऋणस्थगन, ब्याज तथा दण्ड ब्याज द्वारा उठाई गई हानि के लिए भी मुआवजा दिया जा रहा है। एक बार बन्दोबस्त स्कीम का कार्यान्वयन किया गया है। सहकारी बैंकों को पात्र ऋण में परिवर्तन तथा पुर्नसूची तैयार करने तथा एक वर्ष के लिए कृषि ऋण की वसूली को स्थगित करने के लिए अनुदेश जारी किए गए हैं।

माननीय सदस्य ने वायनाड जिला के लिए जो सवाल उठाया है, जोकि सूखे से बुरी तरह प्रभावित है, 31-3-2006 तक 50,000/- रुपए की राशि पर ऋण के ब्याज को माफ कर दिया गया है। श्री पी. करुणाकरण साहब ने WTO रिज़ीम और बायलेटरल एग्रीमेंट का सवाल उठाया है। ये दो सवरन कंट्रीस का मामला है और इस पर हम लोगों का जो बायलेटरल रिलेशन है, उसकी कोई समय-सीमा नहीं है। हम लोगों का जीरो परसैंट ड्यूटी पर श्रीलंका से आयात होता है। उसके चलते निश्चित रूप से इस पर हमारे केरल के किसानों को और देश के दूसरे राज्यों के किसानों को यह समस्या हो रही है। यह बात सच है कि पिछले चार-पांच वर्षों के दौरान ब्लेक पैपर, कार्डेमम और अरेकानट के प्राइस में कमी आई है। भारत सरकार और इसके साथ-साथ केन्द्र सरकार ने इस दिशा में जो महत्वपूर्ण फैसलें लिए हैं, उससे हम आशा करते हैं कि आगे आने वाले वर्षों में निश्चित रूप से इन सामानों का दाम घरेलू बाजार में बढ़ेगा।

मैडम पूरन्देश्वरी जी ने मिनिमम सपोर्ट प्राइस का सवाल सदन में उठाया, वह केवल एग्रीकल्चर मिनिस्ट्री तय नहीं करती है, सीएसीपी के द्वारा यह तय किया जाता है। इन्होंने कॉटन के मूल्य का वेरायटी वाइस मांगा था, एफ-414, एच-777, जे-34, इसका 2004-05 में मिनिमम सपोर्ट प्राइस 1760 रुपए और एच-4 क्वालिटी के लिए 1960, 2004-05 के लिए और 2005-06 के लिए 1980 रुपए तय किया गया है।

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN That is not true.

डॉ. अखिलेश प्रसाद सिंह : श्री अविनाश राय खन्ना साहब ने पंजाब के किसानों की आत्महत्या का सवाल उठाया। हम लोगों को जो फीगर्स पंजाब गवर्नमेंट के द्वारा भेजी गई है, उसमें केवल दो सूसाइड की सूचना भारत सरकार और हमारे मंत्रालय को है और उसी के आधार पर हमने अपना उत्तर आपको दिया है। जहां तक केरल का सवाल है, वहां भी उसी तरह आफिशियल तरीके से जांच नहीं कराई गई है। फिर भी केरल की सरकार ने हम लोगों को जो सूचित किया है कि 180 किसानों ने वहां आत्महत्या की है, उपाध्यक्ष जी, मैं आपके माध्यम से उसकी सूचना सदन में देता हूं। मुझे जो सूचना केरल की सरकार द्वारा मिली है, उस आधार पर मैंने सदन को आपके माध्यम सूचित किया है। अगर एक भी आत्महत्या, जिस प्रदेश में या पूरे देश में होती है तो यह भारत सरकार और हम सभी के लिए चिन्ता और दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण स्थिति है। सरकार चाहती है कि एक भी किसान इस देश में आत्महत्या न करे। â€¦ (व्यवधान) जब से यू.पी.ए. सरकार आई है, किसानों की आत्महत्या को, किसानों के हितों को सरकार ने बड़ी गम्भीरता से लिया है â€¦ (व्यवधान)

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN There is no hope...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Varkala Radhakrishnan, please listen to the hon. Minister.

...(*Interruptions*)

डा. अखिलेश प्रसाद सिंह : और ऋण बोझ को पहले बजट में यू.पी.ए. गवर्नमेंट ने तीन साल में दोगुना करने का निर्णय लिया था। पहले साल हमारा जो 30 परसेंट का लक्ष्य था, 30 परसेंट लक्ष्य से ज्यादा हमने एक साल में ऋण दिया है।â€¦ (व्यवधान)

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR : Sir, please allow me to make a small submission.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: No; Mr. M.P. Veerendra Kumar, please sit down.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPPAN : He has not answered my question...(*Interruptions*)

DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH : I had answered your question...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Hon. Members, please sit down.

Hon. Minister you please continue.

डा. अखिलेश प्रसाद सिंह : हमने अभी आपको बताया कि केरल सरकार ने और भारत सरकार ने किसानों की सहायता करने के जो फैसले लिए हैं, उनको ब्यौरेवार पढ़कर मैंने आपको सुनाया है और आपके जो भी सुझाव आये हैं, उन सुझावों पर भी निश्चित रूप से सरकार गम्भीरतापूर्वक विचार करके अमल में लाएगी। किसानों को मिनिमम सपोर्ट प्राइस या उससे भी ज्यादा प्राइस कैसे मिले, इस दिशा में कारगर कार्रवाई करेगी।

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now, we come to item No. 13.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Hon. Members, please take your seats.

One minute, please. चार बजे एग्रीकल्चर पर डिस्कशन होगा, आप उस पर बोलना।

श्री बसुदेव आचार्य।

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय : कृपया बैठ जायें, रिकार्ड पर कुछ नहीं जा रहा है।

*(Interruptions) â€¦**

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय : एग्रीकल्चर पर चार बजे बहस होगी, उस पर बोल लेना, अभी आप बैठ जाइये।

...(*Interruptions*)

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय : एग्रीकल्चर पर चार बजे बहस होगी, उस पर जो कुछ आपको कहना है, आप कह लेना।

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* Not Recorded.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Hon. Members, please sit down.

SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPPAN Sir, you asked me to put a question, and I had put my question. But the hon. Minister has not answered my question...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR : Sir, please allow me to speak...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Veerendra Kumar, please resume your seat.

श्री अ्विनाश रा्य खन्ना : मंत्री जी, कुछ एक्शोर कर दें कि क्या करने ्वाले हैं। â€¦ (व्यवधान)

उपाध्यक्ष महोद्य : अगर आपको एक्शोर्ंस देंगे तो दूसरों को ्भी एक्शोर्ंस देना प्ड़ेगा।

...(*Interruptions*)

15.12 hrs.